

Sinclair Broadcasting's decision to force their stations to air an anti-Kerry documentary days before the election is a clear example of the dangers of media consolidation.

Sinclair uses the public airwaves free of charge, and is obligated by law to serve the public interest. But when large companies control the airwaves, we get more of what's good for the bottom line and less of what we need for our democracy. Instead of something produced at "News Central" far away, it's more important that we see real people from our own communities and more substantive news about issues that matter.

Sinclair will, of course, claim that it is simply exercising its right to free speech, which has apparently been seen as a meaningful argument. But corporations were not defined as "persons" at the time the first amendment was written, so the so-called "corporate" right to free speech is an ideological invention of fascists and "neo-conservatives"--not one of the inalienable rights guaranteed in the name of our creator. In addition, the source of this "documentary" guarantees that it will be devoid of fact or truth. Permitting Sinclair to proceed with this travesty raises the possibility that the FCC will have influenced the election of the President of the United States.

Sinclair's actions show why we need to strengthen media ownership rules, not weaken them. They show why the license renewal process needs to involve more than a returned postcard. Thank you.